Training the Young Adult Librarian

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THAT THERE ONCE was little concern in library circles about the young adult as an individual seems borne out by the fact that up to the 1920's references to young people as a distinct group were rarely seen. Even rarer were articles about the preparation of librarians to work specifically with this age group. The sub-heading "Education" under "Young People's Work" does not appear in *Library Literature* until 1952. Since that time only four articles have been listed under that specific sub-heading.

However, a careful reading of the literature itself discloses that service to these sub-adults, masked in the inclusive term of "Work with Children," has long been accorded thoughtful consideration. As early as 1897 the American Library Association included on its annual conference agenda a study of methods of library work with children. In one of the two papers read in full, at this conference in Philadelphia, June 21-25, 1897, Edwin Milton Fairchild of the Educational Church Board, Albany, New York, stated very firmly that "Not only must the children's librarian be well fitted by natural personal qualities for her position, but intellectually she must be thoroughly and specially trained for children's library work."[1] This need for specialized training was officially recognized in 1898 by the New York State Library School by the institution of an elective course in children's work.

By 1923 Charles C. Williamson, in *Training for Library Service,* a report prepared for the Carnegie Corporation of New York, could attest that library schools included in their curriculum courses covering principles of library work with children, book selection for children, principles of story-telling, and history of children's literature.[2] A brief section described the course for school librarians,[3] but there was no mention of young adult work in the public library.

Not until seven years later was specific reference to be made to the young adult librarian. In 1930 Jean C. Roos, librarian of the first real

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room for young people, the Robert Louis Stevenson Room in the Cleveland Public Library, in a paper presented at the Young People's Reading Round Table in Los Angeles on the problem of "Training for Library Service with Young People" commented:

> Specialization in the training of young people's workers becomes necessary as public libraries are recognizing the importance of anticipating the demands and interests of this teen age group instead of using salvaging methods later.[4]

To counteract the stated belief of a segment of librarians that a college degree was unnecessary, Miss Roos declared emphatically:

> Not less preparation but even more is desirable to enable librarians to create and foster in young people permanent reading habits, to encourage recreational reading interests and to develop from school reference work, which is a somewhat compulsory use of books, voluntary book usage. Previous college work should include survey courses in education, courses in sociology and a study of both child psychology and adolescent psychology.[5]

Sarah Bogle further strengthened this position by stating in her report on "Trends and Tendencies in Education for Librarianship" in 1931 that: "The minimum of professional training required more and more of those who are engaged in any form of library service consists of four years of college work plus one year in a library school."[6]

At the request of the Carnegie Corporation, Ralph Munn, Director of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, prepared a report in 1936 on some of the problems in library education. He pointed out that children and young people below college age were the heaviest users of public libraries (70 or more percent of circulation), but did not isolate specialized education for librarians working with these young people as a "problem."[7]

The following spring the Board of Education for Librarianship of the American Library Association arranged for a study of post-professional instruction in librarianship in the United States to be made under the direction of the Graduate Library School, University of Chicago.[8] In the five library schools accredited at that time by the Board of Education for Librarianship—California, Chicago, Columbia, Illinois, and Michigan—twenty-seven different courses were being offered in library work with schools and children.[9] Courses for young adult librarians were not mentioned, nor were any young adult positions listed in the table on positions taken by 1937 graduates. Out of

389 graduates, only ten went into children's work,[10] which may have included work with older young people.

Attention was focused more directly on librarians working with youth at the library conference on education for librarianship at the University of Chicago in 1948. Ralph Munn, pinpointing a problem he had ignored in his Carnegie report, stated in a paper on "Education for Public Librarianship," "Library work with children and young people is the most urgently needed specialty, and curricula can easily be modified to provide for it. The substitution of children's and young people's literature for parts of the adult book courses is the chief requirement." [11]

Ruth Ersted, State Supervisor of School Libraries, Minnesota State Department of Education, speaking at the same conference on "Education for Library Service to Children and Youth," reported that the Division of Libraries for Children and Young People of the American Library Association had established a Committee on Education for Library Work with Children and Young People "to determine objectively what the scope and content of education for these groups of librarians should be." [12] The Committee's analysis of the literature on the education of librarians working with youth, covering the period 1936-46, revealed that a college education and a year of library school, "with emphasis placed on book knowledge and adolescent psychology," [13] were considered necessary.

Published the same year was "a report of a field investigation carried out February to May, 1947, to assist with curricular problems then pending before the Dean and Faculty at the School of Library Service, Columbia University" by Ernest J. Reece. Although *The Task and Training of Librarians* was based on the contributions of 200 persons, no reference was made to young adults as such.[14]

In 1954, Columbia University Press published a compilation of reports prepared for the 1952-53 seminar on education for librarianship at the School of Library Service, Columbia University. Under the editorship of Robert D. Leigh, *Major Problems in the Education of Librarians* addressed itself to problems of educating special librarians, village librarians, and school and children's librarians. The members of the seminar found that curricula for preparing librarians to work with children and young people in schools and in public libraries were confusing in their variety and exhibited no common professional standard or rationale. There were at least five distinguishable types of training:

the special modified course of study in the thirty or more "accredited" (by ALA) graduate-professional library schools providing training for children's work in public libraries but not in schools; a different one-year graduate program in most of these schools to train school librarians; a few undergraduate (four year) library school programs purporting to educate librarians for professional positions generally but with a major emphasis on the training of school librarians; a much larger number of four year programs in teacher-training institutions for training school librarians along with other special teacher positions in the school; a program in these same institutions but with half or less time devoted to library-training subjects to provide librarians for part-time school positions (teacher librarians).[15]

After examining the relative merits of these programs, the problems of certification for school librarians and the fact that although school librarians and children's librarians work through different institutions and have some different purposes and may use variant methods, they concluded that the general knowledge and skills needed were so similar that the two groups required essentially the same type of preparation.

With the added support of conclusions reached by Sara Fenwick in her master's thesis, "Education of Librarians Working with Children in Public Libraries,"[16] and by Ruth Ersted in her thesis on "The Education of School Librarians,"[17] the members of the seminar on education for librarianship recommended the following course of study:

UNDERGRADUATE (Half Year)

Philosophy and functions of the library
Children's literature
Adolescent literature
Selection and use of library materials (including reference materials)
Teaching the use of books and libraries (which might carry education credit as a methods course)
Audio-visual materials (as part of the education department's requirement)
Laboratory work
Cataloging and classification

GRADUATE (Calendar Year)

First Semester

A perspective course
Advanced course in materials (including A-V)
School and public library service to adolescents

Electives
Procedures and programs of curriculum improvement
Rural and urban sociology
Education and community development

Second Semester

Literature for children and adolescents (advanced course, including adult literature)
Theory of library administration (a basic, general course)
Research methods
Electives
Improvement of reading in secondary schools
Public school administration and supervision

Summer Session

Seminar on research problems
Electives
One literature course: Science
Humanities
Social science
Fine arts
Advanced information sources[18]

Following the same rationale, the Committee on Training for Library Work with Children and Young People, chaired by Margaret A. Edwards, presented a progress report in the Workshop on the Core of Education for Librarianship, at the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago, in August, 1953. Stipulating five years of college education, the Committee broadened the program to include not less than 15 semester hours and not more than 18 semester hours of work at the undergraduate level which should be as well organized and well developed as the professional unit.[19] The concepts to be stressed at the two levels were (1) the library as a social and educational agency; (2) the four large educational objectives formulated by the Educational Policies Commission which serve as undergirding bases for the work of children's and young adults' librarians: self-realization, human relationships, economic efficiency, and civic responsibility; and (3) the need of librarians working with children and young people for knowledge, understandings, skills, attitudes and appreciations (a) of people, (b) of books and other materials, (c) of guidance and use of materials, (d) of basic principles of organization, (e) of the library and the community, (f) of the place of libraries in

the communication process, (g) of librarianship as a profession and (h) the relationship of the individual to the profession.[20]

The failure to separate the young adult librarian from the children's librarian in the above programs is noteworthy. As early as 1937 a questionnaire circulated by a Committee of the Young People's Reading Round Table, ALA, disclosed that there were over twenty-five libraries rendering special service to adolescents, and over sixty public librarians devoting their time exclusively to this age group.[21] By the 1950's the number of librarians specializing in young adult work had reached such proportions that over half of the accredited library schools offered special courses in literature for young people.

Not even ALA seemed to think it necessary to stipulate special preparation. In the pamphlet *Young Adult Services in the Public Library,* published in 1960 by the American Library Association, only a single paragraph was allotted to the discussion of professional preparation:

> The most important single component in library service for young adults is the librarian selected to do this special job, for this person serves as the key to open the door to adult reading for this group. The young adult librarian should have full professional training—five years of formal education beyond secondary schooling including graduation from an accredited library school. Specialized courses in service to this group are an asset. A wide book background, broad interests, and a love of reading are essential. A knowledge of the psychology of the rapidly changing period of adolescent development and a knowledge of literature suited to this age group are also essential.[22]

The only amplification of this statement was given under "In-Service Training":

> Increasingly, library schools are offering special courses on materials and services for young adults in the regular curriculum. Fortunately, also, much needed institutes and workshops on service to young adults are increasing in number. Until adequate courses are established to meet the demand for trained young adult librarians, however, it will be necessary for public libraries to plan in-service training programs for staff assigned to this field.[23]

Topics recommended for inclusion in an in-service program were:

Adolescent psychology
Surveys of books written for the adolescent and of adult books of interest to the adolescent

Principles of book selection for young adults
Book promotion and techniques and devices to stimulate reading
Book talks and speaking in public
Organization and procedures for work with young adults in the local library.[24]

An examination of current course offerings, based on a recent survey, discloses that the situation has changed very little in the past seven years. Of the thirty-nine accredited schools replying, thirty-one offer one course in literature for young adults. Six schools offer two or more courses. Three schools have no separate course dealing specifically with the young adult. Titles for the courses vary. Some are for both "children and young people." Others are labeled "books and other library materials" to show the scope of the course content. The number of years such courses have been offered varies from one to forty, with the median falling at sixteen. Those offered for the longest periods originated in most cases as courses in children's literature and evolved into either a compound course or two distinct courses.

The literature courses are popular enough to be scheduled several times a year. Nine schools schedule the course once, fifteen schedule the course twice, ten schedule the course three times, and three offer the course every quarter including the summer session.

The majority (twenty-two) grant three semester hours of credit. Four allow three quarter hours of credit. Five allow less credit and four allow more, the maximum being four semester hours.

The number of students enrolling for the course in any one school varies from twelve to 175. Nine regularly attract 30 or less; twelve, 31 to 60; seven, 61 to 90; four, 100 to 130; and two, over 160 each calendar year. In thirty-one schools the course is entirely elective. Six require it of students specializing in young adult or school work.

The major emphasis in the course, as indicated by respondents, is on book selection principles (twenty-four schools) and discussion of books suitable for young adults (thirty schools). Probably due more to the problem of semantics than great differences in approach, five schools said reading guidance, one said "wide examination of the literature," one said "acquaintance with the literature" and two said "reading of the literature." Although most schools checked two or more of the categories, only one listed "understanding of the adolescent" as a major emphasis.

An examination of other emphases revealed that all except two of the courses include some discussion of the psychology, needs and in-

terests of young adults. In addition, twenty-five schools stated that separate courses in adolescent psychology were available to their students, most in schools of education. Twenty-six schools give some consideration to public relations; twenty-nine stress reader guidance; thirty-two offer experience in giving book talks; seventeen include some visits to libraries; and twenty-two provide direction in programming. Several indicated uncertainty about this last term, so the figure for "programming" (guidance in planning and developing programs for young adults) is undoubtedly smaller than it should be.

The course in literature for young adults is, therefore, basically the same in all of the schools. All include reading of books, class discussion of books and often other materials, and critical evaluation of the books read. Almost all spend some time on the adolescent himself, reading guidance, and public relations. A few include programming and how to organize and run a young adult department. One or two focus attention on controversial books and the problems of censorship.

Outside of the literature course, which generally covers the topics indicated as important for the young adult librarian in *Young Adult Services in the Public Library*,[22] the schools are offering little specifically for the young adult librarian who is expected to perform a wide variety of tasks. Only thirteen of the responding schools offer a course designed to prepare librarians to administer young adult departments. Most of these are hybrid courses including the children's department as well. The twenty-three schools which have no courses to meet this need said that students took an administrative course in either the public library or the school library.

Despite this dearth of specialized courses, twenty-eight out of thirty-four responding on this question felt their program was adequate for the educating of the young adult librarian. Typical reasons given for this optimistic conclusion were that time is inadequate to offer more course work, other courses such as the public library course adequately meet the need, an "internship" compensates for any lack of course work, and specialization should come in the sixth year. The eight schools which felt their programs were inadequate suggested adding a course directed at young people alone; a course on programming or services, including book talks, TV, and films; and a course in supervision of the young adult program.

To determine how well current programs were preparing the young adult librarian for her work, a questionnaire was sent to thirty young adult librarians representing major library systems in the United

States. Although only four stated that the school attended offered a special program for young adult librarians, all had taken one or more courses on literature for the young adult (sometimes literature for children and young adults), book selection, reference, reading guidance and administration. Of the courses taken, cited as the most helpful were those dealing with the selection and evaluation of materials. Other courses listed by two or more librarians included general book selection (6), basic reference (5), literature for young adults (6), curriculum materials for schools (2), and the adult literature courses (2). Courses in young adult psychology were mentioned by two and techniques of reader guidance (book talks, etc.) by five.

The courses they had felt the greatest need for were literature for the young adult with heavy emphasis upon book selection and criticism (9); adolescent psychology with particular attention to the adolescent's needs in our society (8); programming, including book talks, annotating books, preparing booklists, leading discussions and book reviewing (7); audio-visual materials and their effective use (5); and administration of young adult programs (2).

If allowed to set up their own program of courses they would require the following in addition to the usual core courses: literature for the young adult (27), adolescent psychology with attention to current problems (17), programming (16), an administration course on young adult services (8), or school and public library work (3), and the evaluation and use of audio-visual materials, including films, records, radio and TV (6). Others mentioned were courses in criticism, comparative literature, adult literature (American, English and continental), publicity, information retrieval, and children's literature.

If not required, the following were suggested electives: courses in all types of adult literature (11), courses in social problems and work with young people in the community (7), courses in communications media (6), courses in school librarianship or cooperation with school programs (3), courses in adolescent psychology (2), and courses dealing with the "art of advertising" (3). Single votes were cast for courses in information retrieval, reader guidance, history of young adult work, and library work with young adults. In general the respondents seemed to agree with Caroline Bull, Coordinator, Young Adult Services, Prince George's County Memorial Library, Hyattsville, Maryland, who commented on the questionnaire that literature courses, general sociology, at least one basic philosophy course and anything else the college cur-

riculum could offer on community organizations or work with groups should be stressed as electives. All this points to her personal philosophy that if you work with young people there is not anything you do not need to know.

Opinions on the need for practical work as part of the young adult librarian's preparation were four to one in favor. The most common reason for recommending its inclusion was the importance of bringing theory into focus through actual experience. The main objection stemmed from the belief that such experience should and would be provided by library in-service programs.

Of the libraries surveyed, all provide some sort of in-service training to orient the new librarian, to inspire the experienced librarian, to help all librarians fill gaps in their preparation, and to assist them in keeping abreast of new developments in the field. To achieve these objectives, all schedule sessions throughout the year. The number varies with about half meeting monthly. Programs tend to center around the requirement of extensive reading, often completion of a basic list; book evaluation and reviewing; general discussions of new books; the preparation of book-lists; promotion techniques, especially book talks; and cooperation with schools.

As these librarians look to the future, they envision a formal education supplemented by in-service training that would equip young adult librarians to be flexible, creative, innovative, and psychologically ready to adjust to computerized instant reference services without sacrificing the advisory service many readers still need and desire. Most foresee a phasing out of the young adult department in favor of trained adult librarians who would serve as readers' advisers for the resources of the whole library. Lesser collections no longer meet the range of interests of either the underprivileged, who in the past have rarely frequented the library, or those of the more affluent sectors of our society, whose demands have long strained the resources of young adult rooms.

To meet the requirements of this new generation of young adult librarians, greatly expanded and much more sophisticated programs must be inaugurated in the accredited schools. Literature courses must be broadened and courses in programming and administration added where they are lacking. Undergirding the whole program must be courses in social problems, community relationships, and the mores and cultural patterns of the young adult.

In line with the trend in library education, a minor of 15 to 18 se-

mester hours should be taken at the undergraduate level as a prerequisite to the fifth year graduate masters program in an accredited library school. The prerequisite program should include (1) a general introductory course that clearly establishes the role of libraries in the development of our American culture and its educational, social, and recreational responsibilities in a modern evolving society, (2) a course in the principles of selection of books and other graphic materials that contribute to mankind's desire for knowledge, (3) a course in basic reference sources and the art of bibliography, including principles of selection and evaluation in relation to expected clientele, (4) a course in cataloging with emphasis upon classification of knowledge and appropriate subject headings as a key to the understanding of the organization of knowledge for quick and easy retrieval, and (5) an introductory course in literature for the young adult. Emphasis in the course should center on critical reading of all types of books, fiction (the junior novel, the popular adult book, modern books dealing perceptively with significant themes, controversial books with genuine appeal to teenagers, and the enduring classics) and non-fiction (science as well as biography, history, and the other social sciences). Book selection principles should be thoroughly evaluated in connection with individual titles and censorship as a current problem carefully analyzed. Book talks, written annotations and reviews, preparation and presentation of bibliographies on subjects of current interest, general discussion, and individual conferences with the professor should be integral parts of the course to provide experience in these necessary skills. Embedding the whole course should be a thorough understanding of the teen-ager, his needs, problems and aspirations. All assignments should assure that the student be ever conscious of his future patrons and his role in serving them. In addition to the above courses, the potential young adult librarian should elect courses in adolescent psychology (if possible, this should be a prerequisite to the young adult literature course), current social problems, children's literature, and audio-visual materials.

At the fifth year level, the young adult librarian should be required to take the basic courses in (1) the history of libraries to gain perspective, (2) research methods to acquire research skills and the ability to interpret research studies, (3) adult literature, American, English and European, for background, and (4) advanced reference and/or information retrieval to gain additional skill in locating the unexpected.

For his specialization, at least four courses should be available: an

advanced course in young adult literature, a course in services to young adults, an advanced course in audio-visual materials with emphasis upon TV, radio, records and films, and practical experience in a young adult department or with young adult services.

The advanced course in young adult literature should focus directly on the teen-age culture, its fads, folkways, heroes, values, and worries. Catalytic adult novels whose themes deal realistically with these concerns should make up the bulk of the required readings. Particular attention should also be paid to works of non-fiction dealing with current social problems, careers, and other topics of vital importance to today's emotionally and intellectually involved young adults. To insure development of discernment and discrimination, significant articles and books on the art of reviewing by acknowledged critics such as Lionel Trilling should be mandatory. Comparative studies and projects designed to meet the needs of individuals or recognized groups in the teen culture should be assigned. If possible, the content of the course and the major assignments should be correlated with the practical library experience so that they can be tested and appraised on their actual success. Because of their appeal and acceptance, paperbacks should be stressed.

The course in services to young adults should cover in considerable depth the role of the public library in meeting the needs of young people; the responsibility of the school library to the same young adults; areas of cooperation between the two agencies; reader guidance techniques, e.g., book talks, radio and TV programs, newspaper columns, booklists, bulletin boards, film showings, author "parties," etc.; and the planning and administration of a year-long program both within the library and outside it. One assignment might well be the preparation of visual material, the outlining of a project, or a talk that could be used during the practical library experience.

The advanced course in audio-visual materials should be a practical one centering around the planning of specific programs. The selection of appropriate visuals, their preparation and effective ways to use them would be an integral part of each project. Where possible, the student should participate in television and radio programs, prepare taped book talks, and design a series of publicity releases in the form of booklists, displays, articles, etc. Since bulletin boards are often a problem for a busy librarian, ideas, techniques and sources for effective displays should be a basic unit.

The practical experience unit should offer each student an oppor-

tunity to participate in all of the types of programs the host library offers. Everything from TV programs to actual floor work should be included. If the library has a cooperative program with the schools or provides special services outside the library to the culturally disadvantaged or other groups, the student should participate in the planning and the various presentations. Young students with a strong social conscience and a will to alleviate America's social cancers, if given the opportunity, will more often than not be effective workers with young people who are frequently an enigma to the regular staff.

Electives to fill out the required hours should include such library school courses as the library in the school, literature of the humanities, sciences and/or social sciences, and the administration of the public library as well as courses outside the school which would add to the librarian's knowledge of people and communities or to his skills, e.g., sociology, psychology, education and public speaking. If demand permits, seminars in programming, reader guidance, and special problems should be possible electives.

No matter how well prepared the young adult librarian is at graduation, he will immediately learn that there are still things he does not know about his new library. In-service programs provide the answer. Detroit's training program for young adult librarians takes the form of seven or eight workshops and is designed to supplement the preparation received in library school. Topics covered include the adolescent, history of work with young adults, services of young adult departments, school visits, book talks, and book reviewing. Concurrently, each young adult librarian is reading and writing brief reports on a list of required books and articles. At the end of the year each one is expected to try to moderate the library's "Young America Looks at Books" radio program.[25]

At Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, new staff members are asked to read about 150 books on the Pratt initial list plus 150 titles in young adult collections not listed. After the 300 books are read and discussed with an experienced staff member, the new librarian is assigned books to review for the department. Each also participates in the writing of annotations for new lists and in the over-all program of book talks and book fairs in the ninth, tenth and eleventh grades in the Baltimore Public Schools. To assist them, eight meetings are held each year. These are general "Y" staff meetings in which speakers are featured, sample talks are given, and books are discussed (anything from a title that has been neglected to controversial titles, or

titles with divergent reviews). A handbook entitled "Work with Young Adults" is provided as a working manual. A reference unit and supervisory visits by the coordinator are other devices used to strengthen the program.[26]

Prince George's County Memorial Library, during 1967-68, is covering the following topics in a series of monthly meetings:

Reference Techniques and Sources in Bibliography
Sources in Literature
Sources in the Social Sciences—Part I
    Sociology
    Anthropology
    Political Science
    Education
Sources in the Social Sciences—Part II
    History
    Geography
    Statistics
    Law
    Economics
    Business
Psychology of the Adolescent and Reading Interests
Use of Selection Aids and Reviewing Media
Book Selection Policy; Criteria for Evaluation; Censorship
Preparation and Uses of Booklists; Annotation Writing
Program Planning and Discussion Group Leadership[27]

A series of annotated bibliographies have been prepared as "texts" for several of these sessions.

Vital as such programs are, from time to time young adult librarians need to get away from their own set of problems to regain by study and conversations with other librarians fresh enthusiasm and new perspectives. Course work at accredited library schools provides such opportunities. Even better, perhaps, are short workshops or the longer Federally-sponsored institutes which are available every summer or during the academic year at universities throughout the country. Most of these deal with school programs, but a few designed for the young adult librarian have also been offered; e.g., the University of Denver held a two-week workshop on literature for young adults in 1963 under the direction of Margaret Edwards, who was then Coordinator, Work with Young Adults, Enoch Pratt Free Library. Such workshops

and institutes offer the participants splendid opportunities for new insights as they devote themselves wholeheartedly to one topic, share ideas with fellow librarians, and gain inspiration from the outstanding speakers who serve as consultants.

The day has long since passed when an individual can "finish" his education by obtaining a degree, even a master's degree. Continuing education from birth to death is the watchword. The young adult librarian is not exempt from this pattern. To four years of undergraduate work, he must add a year or more of graduate study before he can be called a "professional." To maintain his professional standing, he must continue to grow through extensive continuous reading, attendance at professional meetings, and concentrated study at special workshops or institutes.

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